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THE COLLEGIATE TRAINING OF THE TEACHER OF HIGH-SCHOOL ENGLISH

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Discussion of the preparation essential to a competent teacher of high-school English requires first a recognition of the fundamental fact that the problem is that of training, not one teacher, but several teachers in one. There is no other subject in the high-school curriculum that requires so striking a combination of mental aptitudes in the instructor handling the course. This arises from the inherent complexity of the subject. "English" includes at least five types of work, of distinctly diverse characters and therefore requiring different combinations of mental qualities for their effective treatment. In the presentation of the individual classic the teacher is acting as analytical and appreciative critic, a function analogous to that of the critic of music or painting. When dealing with the history of literature he is in the field of social history, and, moreover, must be possessed of an adequate basic knowledge of the political history of the country in question. In the field of composition, the present insistence upon high-school practice in the technique of description and narration involves the presumption that the teacher has some native power of artistic creation. In the nationalistic fields of exposition, argumentation, debating, and grammar (if grammar may be correctly defined as the study of the logic of the sentence), the instructor is operating in a field typically represented in the college curriculum by abstract logic and in that of the high school by mathematics—and how unusual a combination with English that is, let the multitude who are in some respects fairly good English students but who "never could get along in mathematics" bear witness. Finally, the demand is now being made that the English teacher shall not only be prepared to read aloud expressively herself (and who can do more than very mediocre teaching of literature without continually

interpreting the writer's message through vividly suggestive oral rendering?), but shall also train her pupil to do the same, incidentally taking care of the problems of voice production. Even ignoring the last detail, the teacher is then working in the field of the public interpreter of art work, a field demanding a combination of mental qualities perhaps most typically represented by the concert musician, instrumental or vocal, with his emotional responsiveness, his technical control of his instrument, and his sense of the audience.

Here, then, is the English teacher's fivefold function: analytical art critic, creative artist, public interpretive artist, historian, and logician! How different are the five mental attitudes involved! And while the aptitudes and working methods of the various members of the group may to a certain extent overlap, yet ability in one does not necessarily infer the ability to succeed in any of the other capacities. Few of the literary historians or critics have created anything of permanent value as an art product; the creative artist may be an utter failure as a public interpreter, even of his own works; the average public performer, elocutionary or musical, rarely appears as a lecturer upon the history of his subject; the logician works by methods very different from those of the creative or interpretive artist. Yet the teacher of English, even in the high school, is presumed to have in some degree the mental endowments of each of the five—not to be a failure in any one of these capacities. And more, he must add a sixth series of qualifications: the sympathy with young life, the ability to get the pupil's point of view, the power to adopt various methods of guiding the pupil's thought even while following it, the executive power—in brief, the schoolroom technique and the human tact that the work of teaching constantly involves.

All of these six lines of ability would appear to be fundamental and requisite. Which can be omitted? In the smaller high school one teacher must cover the entire field of classics, expressive reading, composition written and oral, grammar, and (in some measure at least) the history of literature, and must have a teaching technique equal to the various demands. Even in a larger school in which the size of the faculty makes a certain specialization of fields possible

the special teacher cannot be considered adequately prepared unless she can take the other types of work when occasion demands. As a matter of fact, the "special" teacher of one-sided preparation may positively undo the work that the other English teachers are doing. Not a few instructors in so-called "vocal interpretation" are insisting upon pronunciations alleged to be "correct" and "standard" that an elementary knowledge of historical English phonology would show to be wholly unwarranted. And for a teacher today to deal with English grammar without some historical knowledge of its development (and this implies also some knowledge of the history of the early literature) is simply to give fresh currency to many long-discredited views. Even if we separate the treatment of composition from that of literature, as some have suggested, it still remains true that training in composition is to a certain extent dependent upon the analysis of models drawn from various fields of more or less "literary" writing. And the teacher of literature who discourses warmly but vapidly upon the "beauties" of the English poets, but who is more or less ignorant of, and even loathes, all other forms of English work, is a distinctly baneful influence in not a few schools of today. Nothing less than all of the foregoing equipment will suffice if the qualifications of the teacher are to be considered at all adequate.

If these statements be well founded, two conclusions would seem to follow: First, on account of the complexity of the subject a greater proportionate amount of time must be given to the English department during the years of the prospective English teacher's training than would be the case if he were being prepared for a branch of a homogeneous type. And next, on account of the amount of mental adaptability called for in the presentation of its different phases, a greater number of students naturally interested in the subject are yet naturally unadapted to become really efficient teachers of it than is the case with most other studies. This latter situation is further complicated by the strong tendency among college students to elect English as their chief subject mainly because superficially it appears to lack the respective difficulties of mathematics, the sciences, and the languages, when in fact, properly taught, in its various phases it includes them all, and more. The

lure of literature as perhaps, in general estimation, the most distinctively cultural part of the college curriculum must also be taken into account. Thus, for various reasons there will sometimes appear students with whose aspirations to earn their livings by the teaching of English it is difficult to deal both sympathetically and judiciously.

The task of outlining a general course for the preparation of those who are to undertake the responsibility of handling this complex subject in the secondary school is rendered even more perplexing by several additional considerations. First, students enter college with different degrees of preparation in the more liberalizing branches. For instance, in California it is customary to admit to the various institutions of collegiate rank on either two, three, or four years of high-school English work; and throughout the state, therefore, Freshman English classes contain students of three different grades of advancement. Moreover, in the West but two years of work in one foreign language is the general entrance language requirement, a fact that has a distinct bearing on our main problem. Secondly, so far as this special course involves the use of correlative courses in other departments, the English department must conform to the positions and hours assigned to those courses in the general schedule of the particular college in question; and even within the department there must often be utilized subject-courses (especially of Freshman and Sophomore grade) arranged primarily with a view to their part in the economy of the institution as a whole. Again, local considerations will make some difference in the total length of time that can be devoted to the training of the teacher. In general, the collegiate work is scheduled for four college years. In 1907, however, the Committee of Seventeen appointed by the National Education Association to consider the professional preparation of the high-school teacher reported in favor of a requirement of four years of college training, following four years of high-school training and followed by a year of graduate work, partly academic and partly pedagogic. This five-year collegiate period was almost immediately made the legal requirement in California for the conferring of the high-school teacher's credential, and the California State Board of Education has since prescribed specifically the

amount of work in the university departments of education that the prospective high-school teacher must cover, namely, fifteen units of one hour per week a semester each, including principles of secondary education, school management, practice teaching, and possibly a course in the methods of teaching the major subject. I believe that in only one other state in the country is the requirement so high.

Ignoring so far as possible local considerations, however, what are the general requisites for the high-school English teacher's preparation? Let us presume that on entering college he has completed in the secondary school a four-year course including not less than four years of English, not less than two years of some one language (preferably Latin), not less than two years of algebra and plane geometry, at least a year of some laboratory science, and at least a year of ancient history and a year of United States history (not an unusual combination), with the remainder of the time divided among various electives. He will then need in his coming college years four different types of courses:

1. *Standard developmental courses largely outside of the English field.*—These must be chosen with a view to establishing in the individual the various mental habits needed in the different phases of his work both as a student and as a teacher of the English complex, by employing the various fields in which such development can best be accomplished. In addition to serving this developmental end, these studies will generally also supply materials useful in later years. Thus, the study of Latin, Greek, German, or French will not only, in varying degrees, establish a linguistic method that will aid the student in the study of Old English, but will also furnish materials for studying the composition of the English vocabulary and will in addition aid in sharpening that word-sense that is indispensable to vivid writing. These developmental courses, I take it, should include: (a) a continuation through at least two college years of the foreign language studied in the preparatory school; (b) a year of history, preferably English history as a basis for the history of English literature (unless English history has been well covered in the high-school course); (c) a year of a physical science, perhaps preferably biological as dealing with problems most closely related

to human life; (*d*) a year of psychology, essential to the modern teacher; (*e*) a course in logic or mathematics or both, invaluable for establishing the habits essential to rational analysis; and in addition (*f*) sufficient gymnasium work for the general strengthening of the physique for the sedentary and nerve-racking life that is to follow.

2. *Courses in the various phases of the English complex.*—These may well include (*a*) an introductory course for training in intelligent reading, clear thinking, and effective writing, the basis being standard novels, dramas, essays, and verse, and the general method involving much written discussion; (*b*) a course in the general history of English literature from Beowulf to the present time; (*c*) a course in the general history of American literature; (*d*) an intensive course in Shakespeare; (*e*) intensive courses in one or more other periods of English literature, chosen with due regard to the superior claims of the last two centuries from the high-school point of view; (*f*) courses in Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and the history of the English language; (*g*) oral interpretation, including some attention to voice production, primarily for the benefit of the prospective teacher himself; (*h*) advanced composition; (*i*) a course in the theory of English teaching. To these might be added, as advisable late electives in the English field, courses in (*j*) the novel, (*k*) the drama, and (*l*) the history of criticism. It must be emphasized that the courses in literature should be in general neither exclusively historical nor exclusively analytical. The student who has been trained wholly by the historical method finds himself greatly at a loss when first attempting work in the high-school field, where that method is largely out of place; and the student who has been trained in colleges, where literature is taught almost wholly from the analytical standpoint lacks in large measure, experience shows, a sense of literary perspective.

3. *Courses in the field of general educational theory.*—These may include, in addition to the year's work in psychology above mentioned, courses in the general principles of education and especially of secondary education, in the history of education, in school administration and classroom management, and in the teaching of English as above indicated, together with properly supervised experience in the practical work of instruction.

4. *Additional courses peculiarly helpful to the student and teacher of English.*—What shall these be? One of the more striking differences between the demands on the teacher of literature and those confronting instructors in other subjects is born of the fact that there is no field of human thought or activity into which a writer may not roam, and in each case his classroom interpreter must in general be able to make clear his thought or suffer embarrassment. On the whole, however, the most useful supplementary courses would appear to be: (a) additional history, especially in the Renaissance period; (b) a second language and literature (modern); (c) ethics (basic to many problems in literature) and the history of philosophy; and (d) sociology.

A word might be added as to what would appear to be the proper content of the course in the teaching of high-school English, mentioned in the second group. To make it merely a review course seems a mistake. The materials in the field are too rich and the prospective teacher's needs are too pressing to waste time thus, especially when a number of handbooks for review work of various kinds are easily accessible. Rather should the course bring out the sources and evidences of the new movements in the world of English teaching of today; the purposes and content of the English course; the principles underlying its organization and the variety of its existent forms; the principles that should govern the choice of classics for high-school assignment and the wealth of methods and aids for their study, with some actual practice in application; the principles underlying the teaching of composition, both oral and written, with the recent attempts to standardize grading, and methods for vitalizing the classroom work; the spelling problem; aims and methods in the teaching of grammar; high-school journalism, debating, and dramatics; the organization of the high-school library; the correlation of English with other studies and the question of co-operation with other departments; the bibliography of the subject with professional bibliographical method; and the use of the various professional magazines. As in all other developmental work, this, it would appear, should not be a mere series of lectures, but should be conducted in such a way as to make effective

use of the students' readiness to co-operate. From the standpoint of the prospective teacher this is the crucial course in his collegiate English work, for it not only directs his attention to the teaching values and the teaching methods in the field that he has hitherto viewed only as a student, but it also gives him a mass of practical detail that he would otherwise have to gain through long, and often bitter, experience.

From the materials in the four groups just outlined may be constructed a general course preparatory to the teaching of English in schools of secondary grade. Yet it is doubtful whether such a course can or should be always consistently adhered to. It is subject to modification for any one of a number of causes. In addition to the question of differences in English college-entrance requirements already referred to, there will be differences in the various high-school elective subjects that may make it necessary to alter the individual student's course in history or science, or more especially in foreign languages. Where an unusually heavy subject is elected from a college group (as, for instance, not infrequently occurs in the languages) some compensatory shift must be made. The advised (not the required) courses in the English department will probably not be offered in some years. The schedules of other departments will similarly vary. Again, while the general needs of the students are the same, a given individual may require a greater or less degree of training in certain directions than the typical case. Often students who finally become excellent teachers do not find themselves sufficiently to decide on their life-work until the beginning of the Senior year or even later, when readjustments of their courses must be made to fit their newly formed plans. Further, it must again be remembered that local conditions are often an important factor in the problem. Thus, in California we have many tourists from every section of the United States. These in many instances return to make the state their permanent home and, holding the Bachelor's degree and seeking to enrol in the universities as graduate students in compliance with the high teaching standards legally required, they bring with them many different varieties of collegiate preparation. In such cases, while neither the

total amount nor the quality of the work is lowered, yet certain equitable adjustments must occasionally be made. On the whole, then, it would seem that in general the nature of each candidate's preparation, and to a certain extent his personality, must make the arrangement of his schedule a separate and individual problem for diagnosis and advice.

Yet is it not true that in every school that aims at preparing high-school teachers of English a standard scheme must be assumed for the purpose, theoretically sound, and capable of producing a satisfactory product in the case of the student who is of sufficient mental adaptability and who enters upon his college work seriously and with the assumed combination of entrance requirements? The exact arrangement of this scheme will depend upon the general schedule of the school, but certain things about it would seem to be obvious, namely, that developmental courses should be taken as early as the student is mentally ready for them and time limitations permit; that the English work should be distributed throughout the collegiate years; that since few students decide upon a teaching career before the beginning of the Junior year, the first two years of work for the prospective teacher should not be markedly different from what would be advised for the general English major student; that the distinctly professional courses should be reserved for those years when the student can attack them with the greatest degree of maturity; and that courses in collateral departments should so far as possible precede and prepare for the allied English courses, so that, for example, the study of the Elizabethan period in literature should follow the study of the Renaissance in the department of history. These things go without saying; and yet it is not always easy to harmonize their, at times, conflicting claims. It may not, therefore, be out of place to reproduce one attempt to solve the problem, an outline that in general coincides with the schedule for the purpose at the University of Southern California, although one or two modifications are forced on us by local conditions, and especially by the fact that a state provision exempts experienced teachers from certain parts of their graduate work.

FIVE-YEAR COLLEGIATE COURSE FOR PREPARATION FOR THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Freshman Year

	Units ¹
English composition ² (based on discussions of novels, dramas, essays, and verse)	6
Foreign language ² (entrance language continued)	6-10
A physical science ² (botany or zoölogy)	8-10
History, English ²	4
Survey of English literature ^{2, 3}	6
Physical training ²	2

Sophomore Year

Shakespeare ⁴ or the novel	3-4
Romantic or Victorian period of English literature	3
Foreign language ² (<i>continued</i>)	6
Psychology ²	6
History, mediaeval	6
Advanced composition ⁴	2
Vocal expression ²	2
Public speaking	2-4
Physical training ²	2

Junior Year

Old English and the history of the English language ²	6
American literature ⁴	3
A literary period (Victorian, ⁴ Romantic, ⁴ Classical, or Elizabethan)	3
Foreign language ² (a second begun ?)	6-10
History, the Renaissance	3
Logic	3
Ethics	2
Elective in history or oratory (debating), sociology, or bionomics	3-4
Physical training if required	1-2

Senior Year

Period courses ⁵ (Classical or Elizabethan) or courses in Chaucer, Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, or Tennyson	2-5
Principles of education ² (general and in secondary schools)	6
Foreign language	4-8
History of philosophy	6
Electives to complete a total of 120 units for the four years ⁵	

¹ The "unit" is a course of one hour a week for one eighteen-week semester.

² Absolute requirement.

³ Regularly a Sophomore course, to which English major students may be admitted as Freshmen.

⁴ This course advised.

⁵ Students are advised *not* to take more than twenty-four units of English *literature* during the undergraduate course.

Graduate Year

	Units ¹
Teaching of high-school English ²	3
Elective ³ from critical theory, advanced history of the novel or drama, the Middle English period, etc.....	5
Practice teaching.....	4
School management.....	2
Elective ⁴ from English, education, philosophy, language, or history.....	12

In addition to taking the course as above outlined, or its equivalent, the prospective high-school English teacher at the University of Southern California must qualify by taking the so-called "English finals for graduate students." These examinations are necessary primarily because a number of candidates for the license to teach spend only one year (the graduate year) at the university, and in some cases they can even comply with the state law and with all of the stated university requirements in a single semester. Under these circumstances a system of fairly searching general examinations is essential. But though devised for English special cases, this group of supplementary tests is prescribed for all of the other graduates as well, whether candidates for the license to teach or for an advanced degree, and for them it serves rather as a spur, its influence reaching back into the preparation in the undergraduate years. This series of tests, it will be observed, is *not* intended as a detailed review of the preceding five years of work. It is rather a demonstration that the student has acquired during his college career certain mental habits and powers, and that he has easily at command a body of information such as the teacher of English must continually carry with him. The requirements are as follows: (1) The candidate must demonstrate that he has personal acquaintance with the chief masterpieces of English and American literature, and that he is familiar with the general historical development of those literatures. (2) He is given a rather short piece of literature with which he is unfamiliar, and writes a critique upon it, evaluating it as to thought values, construction, style, and metrical and tone-color effects. (3) He must pass an examination upon

¹ The "unit" is a course of one hour a week for one eighteen-week semester.

² Absolute requirement.

³ May be used toward the degree of Master of Arts.

⁴ These electives give opportunity for securing a special teaching recommendation in a minor subject or may be used toward the attainment of the degree of Master of Arts.

some special literary period or movement elected by himself, with the proviso, however, that if he is at the time taking such a course in class, the university will waive the special examination. (4) He must give evidence of having a good general knowledge of the nature of language and the phenomena of its development, and of the history of the English language. (5) He must not fail to show power in the organization of his thought and in its oral and written presentation.¹ These examinations are offered early in the graduate year and again toward its end, and all students are encouraged to present themselves on the first of these occasions with a view either to passing the tests as early as possible or to discovering their weaknesses while there is time to remedy them. The passing of these "English finals" examinations, the satisfying of the various requirements in the individual courses, and the successful accomplishment of his practice teaching through four hours a week during one semester, entitle the candidate to receive from the university a recommendation that the state grant him his license to teach in the high schools of California.

The importance of the distinctive training of the high-school teacher for his special work we have begun to appreciate only very recently. Personally I have been trying for the past six years to learn what advances toward the solution of the question were being made generally in the universities and colleges throughout the country, but I have been able to collect little but scattered hints and opinions. Of course, the recent questionnaires of the National Council were intended to elicit an expression of views as to values. Next necessarily must follow the stage of organic construction through comparison. It is hoped that these suggestions as to the problem, its difficulties, and what would appear to be some underlying principles in the matter, may at least help to stimulate further discussion.

¹ To be strictly consistent with the requirements for the complete equipment of the English teacher as outlined in the beginning of this paper, a test in interpretative reading should be required, but the realization of the imperative need for such ability is of so recent date in the world of English teachers, and there are so many mature students whose lack of such training cannot be repaired at so late a period in their lives, that no such test has been instituted. Students so situated, however, are immediately assigned to a special class for what aid is possible.